

September 5, 2024 ARB Meeting, Item #3: 3000 El Camino Real [23PLN-00110]

herb <[REDACTED]>

Wed 9/4/2024 5:27 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

Cc:Raybould, Claire <Claire.Raybould@CityofPaloAlto.org>;Gerhardt, Jodie <Jodie.Gerhardt@CityofPaloAlto.org>;Council, City <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>;Clerk, City <city.clerk@cityofpaloalto.org>;planning.commission@pln.sccgov.org <planning.commission@pln.sccgov.org>

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**SEPTEMBER 5, 2024 ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MEETING, AGENDA ITEM #3
3000 EL CAMINO REAL [23PLN-00110].**

I urge you to continue this agenda item to a date uncertain to provide the City Council and the Planning and Transportation Commission the opportunity to correct a drafting error that occurred when Ordinance No.4648 was considered and adopted.

The original Planned Community (PC) zone district for this site (Ordinance No. 2533) was adopted prior to the time that a public benefit was required for PC zones.

When a new Zoning Ordinance became effective in July 1978, a public benefit finding was required for new PC zone districts, including those that amended previously adopted PC zone districts such as the one for 3000 El Camino Real.

On May 22, 2000, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 4637 that amended PC 2533 to permit child care facilities at 3000 El Camino Real and amended the Zoning Map to show the site with the designation PC 4637.

One month later, on June 26, 2000, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 4648 that amended PC 2533 (instead of amending PC 4637) to permit building-mounted telecommunications facilities at 3000 El Camino Real and amended the Zoning Map to show the site with the designation of PC 4648.

The result is that the Zoning Map shows the designation PC 4637 that permits child care facilities, but does not permit building-mounted telecommunication facilities, but if the Zoning Map showed the designation PC 4648 it would refer to a zone district that permits building-mounted telecommunications facilities, but not permit child care facilities.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires evaluation of the whole of a project that includes multiple discretionary approvals. [CEQA Regulation 15378(c): The term "project" refers to the activity which is being approved and which may be subject to several discretionary approvals by governmental agencies. The term "project" does not mean each separate governmental approval.]

When the City Council adopts a PC zone district, it approves a Development Plan that includes "A land use plan for the proposed district indicating the areas proposed for each use or combination of uses identified by the development program statement". [Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Section 18.38.190(d)]

PC 2533 adopted a land use plan that shows the location of the theaters.

Replacing the theaters with offices requires an amendment to the PC zone district pursuant to PAMC Chapter 18.80.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Herb Borock

Agenda Item #3: Conversion of Palo Alto Square Theatre

holzemer/hernandez [REDACTED]

Wed 9/4/2024 10:38 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

Dear ARB Members,

As a 32-year Palo Alto resident, homeowner, and close neighbor (living the Mayfield area) to the Palo Alto Square Theater, I wanted to express my viewpoint that the theater needs to be saved because it became much more than just a movie house over the past 30 years -- it became and remains a truly essential community gathering place (before its pre-mature closing in 2020).

The importance of this Theater can't be understated because it is one of the few entertainment places, for young and old, that is left in our City within walking distance of nearly every resident. Once our City had several close-by places, like the Palo Alto Bowl or the Varsity Theater, where people of all ages could come and enjoy, laugh, cry, and just grow in companionship. Part of having a healthy and thoughtful City are the real physical places, like Lucie Stern or Cubberly, that a community shares -- the Palo Alto Square Theater is one of those unique places.

I encourage the ARB to see and review the importance of keeping community spaces, like the Palo Alto Square Theater, and work toward saving the Theater from destruction.

Converting a wonderful movie theater into simply another office building, when the real estate market for office space is already saturated now, seems ridiculous and a total waste for a potential community space that is desperately needed in our City today.

Vote "no" on the application to convert the Theater to more office space.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Terry Holzemer

[REDACTED]
Palo Alto, CA 94306

ARB 9/18/24: Item 2 4335-4345 El Camino Real

Alex Lew <[REDACTED]>

Sun 9/15/2024 8:49 PM

To: Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>; Kallas, Emily <Emily.Kallas@cityofpaloalto.org>

 1 attachments (15 MB)

2017-06-07_2700WElCamino_bikepath.pdf;

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ARB,

It has been brought to my attention that a ped-bike path was built in 2021 as part of the Summerhill development at 2700 W El Camino (cross street Del Medio). The bike path extends from Del Medio Ave to a blank wall at the Palo Alto border. I have attached the conceptual drawings from the Planning Commission.

Although the bike path is relatively short, it would be useful for connecting Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Los Altos. If you travel through the Monroe Park neighborhood, you will see lots of pedestrians and cyclists crossing between the cities on Miller Ave.

I would like to see the proposed project integrate the bike path into the site plan.

Alex Lew
Mountain View



Potential Bike + Pedestrian Path

Conceptual - for discussion only

Not to scale

Note: Not to scale; for information only

Proposed bike and pedestrian path easement provided on neighboring property

Approximate area for requested bike and pedestrian public access easement

2700 El Camino Real Development Project (Mountain View)

Project Site

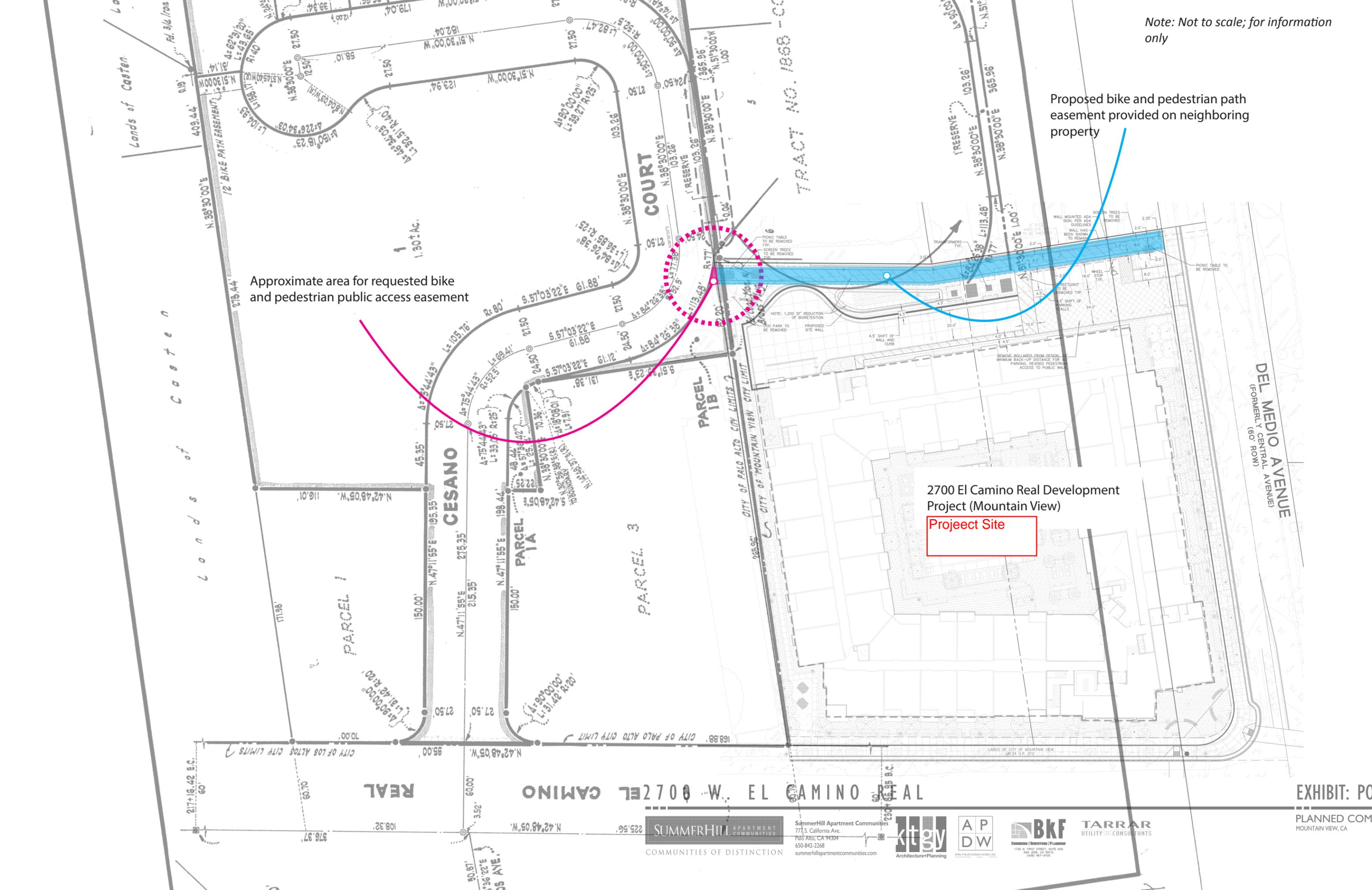


EXHIBIT: PO

PLANNED COM
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA

SUMMERHILL APARTMENT COMMUNITIES
COMMUNITIES OF DISTINCTION

SummerHill Apartment Communities
777 S. California Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94304
650-842-2268
summerhillapartmentcommunities.com

ktgy
Architecture+Planning

AP
DW

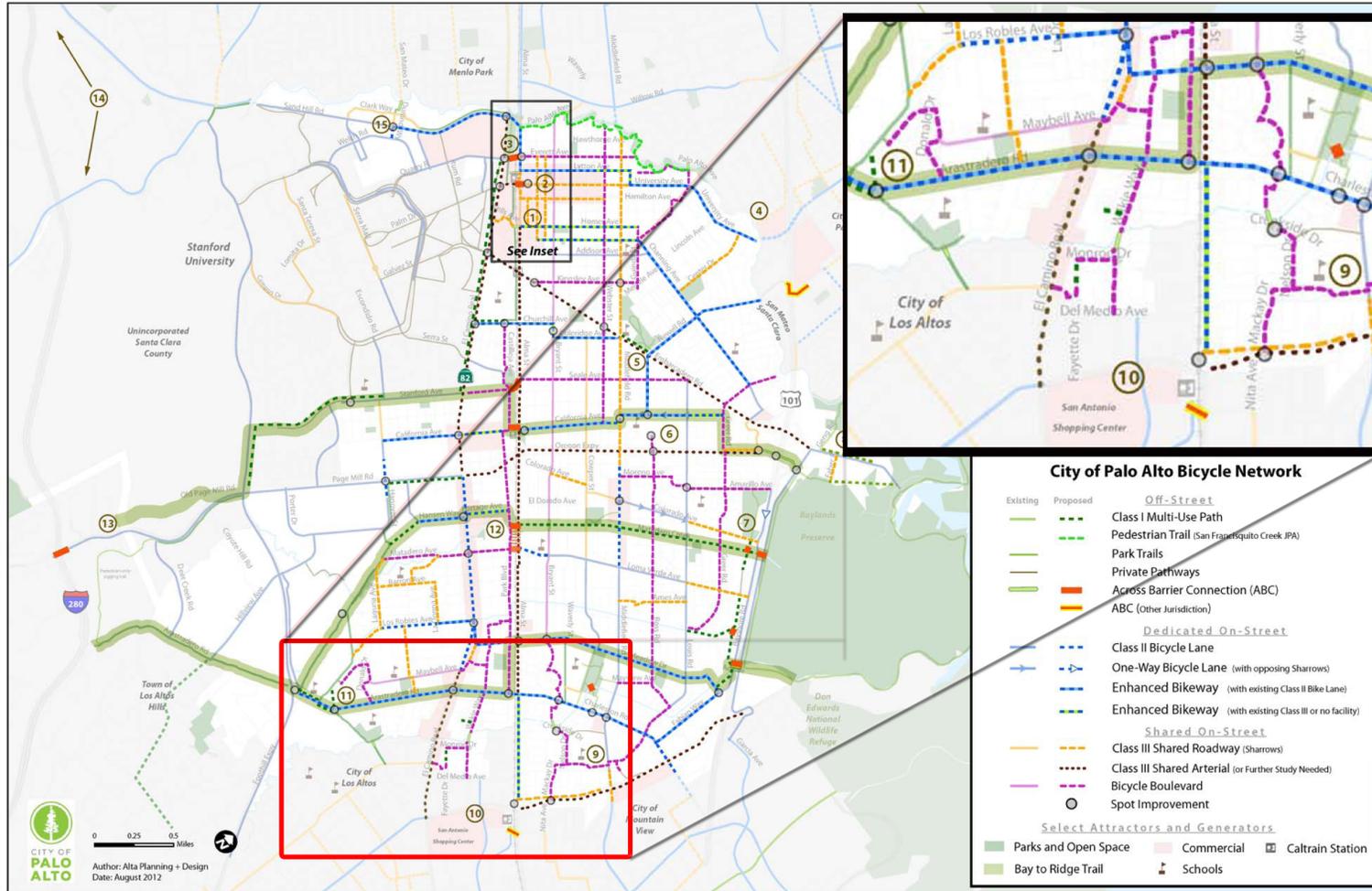
BKf
ENGINEERS | SURVEYORS | PLANNERS
1720 N. FIRST STREET, SUITE 600
SAN JOSE, CA 95131
(408) 467-9100

TARRAR
UTILITY CONSULTANTS

“Cesano Court is a designated future bike boulevard in the City of Palo Alto’s adopted 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan and there’s a general goal to improve bike/ped connectivity to Mountain View in the San Antonio Center/El Camino area.

- Jarrett Mullen | Associate Transportation Planner | City of Palo Alto (8/29/2016)

Recommended Facilities and Conditions | 6-3



Map 6-1. Proposed Bikeway Network

El Camino / Cesano development enables important pathway to Mountain View

Robert Neff [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 10:40 PM

To: Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>; Kallas, Emily <Emily.Kallas@cityofpaloalto.org>
Cc: Transportation <Transportation@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Building <Building@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Raybould, Claire <Claire.Raybould@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Coles, Charlie <Charlie.Coles@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Star-Lack, Sylvia <Sylvia.Star-Lack@CityofPaloAlto.org>

📎 1 attachments (549 KB)

DelMedioCesanoPathway.pdf;

Dear ARB Commissioners,

A developer is bringing a townhouse development to ARB this Thursday which can enable an important pathway connection to Mountain View. It is on the ARB agenda for this Thursday Sept. 19. ARB, Planning, and Transportation should work to make sure that completion of this connection is in the plans.

The development is at 4335-4345 El Camino Real [24PLN-00152], on El Camino Real on both corners at Cesano Court.

The next development south on ECR is in Mountain View, at 2700 W El Camino. There is a mixed use path running on the East side of that development from Del Medio Ave to the back fence.

That pathway is currently blocked by the fence at the back of the property, and a very short distance across the tip of the 4345 El Camino Real property would need to be set aside to complete the pathway. I don't see any development besides perhaps plantings in that part of the 4345 ECR plans.

In the planning documents going to ARB there is no mention of this potential connection.

Please be aware of this and work to include this in the plans as soon as possible, and planning and transportation staff should do whatever else is required to enable this connection. It will improve the low stress connectivity to Los Altos from Mountain View and Palo Alto, particularly for residents who need to make school connections across ECR.

See attached map, indicating the existing path with a line, and the small circle indicating the missing connection.

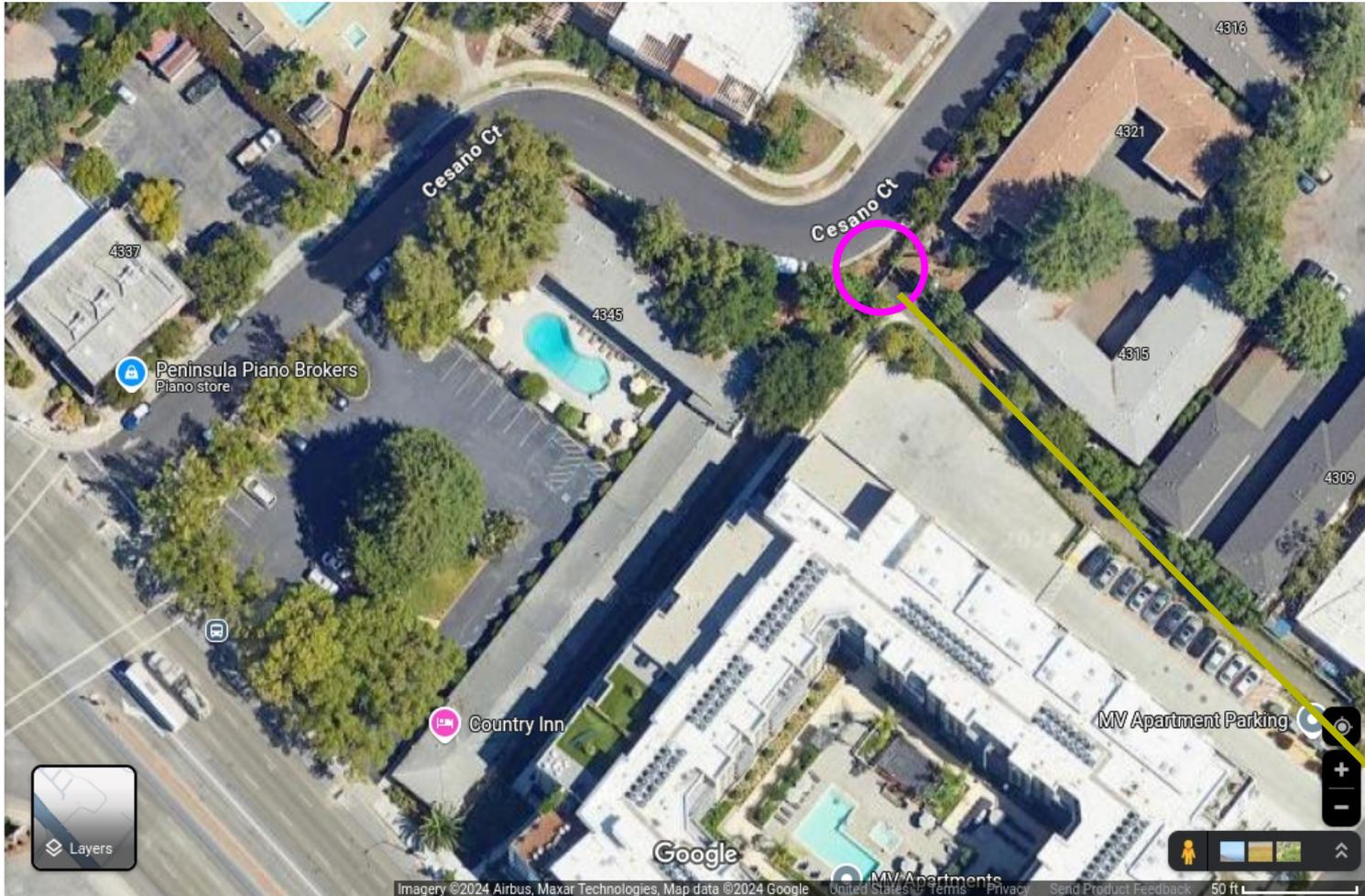
Reviewing this application, I think it's the kind of development found in that part of the city, and I hope it can advance quickly, including this tiny change.

-- Robert Neff
Palo Alto

Development plans are here:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Planning-Development-Services/Current-Planning/Projects/43334335-and-4345-El-Camino-Real>

Missing bike/ped pathway connection 4335-4345 El Camino Real can fix!



Pathway connection from Del Medio Ave in Mtn View implemented. It stops at the MV/PA border.

Palo Alto needs to require a few feet of connection to Cesano Court, where a fence is now.



Thank you

Shailesh Shah · 

Sun 9/15/2024 12:04 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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For not converting theatre in to offices

Let us know future plans of reopening the theatre!

Best

Shailesh

Sent from my iPhone

Thanks

siva heiman [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 12:13 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Thanks for saving the theater space for the purpose of having a place where a group of people can see a film or have some common experience.

The value of that experience in seeing the some film or other form of entertainment can be greatly enhanced when people listen to others and learn that each person's observations and ideas are different because each of us has a difference set of former experiences and assumptions of how our real life "should" be.

In general, we all have the same set of needs but we have many different ways of getting our needs met. That's a good thing because we don't have to be fighting for the same limited supply of anything. Instead we can learn from different cultures and expand our set of solutions to problems to something we might learn from someone else. For example, we all need food but not everyone is capable of digesting cow milk. "One man's meat is another man's poison."

To me the important question is how can people sit in a circular formation so everyone can see everyone else and can listen and talk with others who saw the same show. Maybe breaking up the audience into age groups first and maybe then bringing the sub groups together. Maybe have before and after questions to see if people have changedor broadened their way of thinking about a topic. We all make assumptions that we don't realize we have.

I believe that all of the above is actually necessary, but not sufficient, for a democracy to actually work. I would be interested in working with a group of other people to explore the possibilities.

You may contact me if you have further questions.

Siva Heiman

[REDACTED]
Palo Alto, CA 94303

[REDACTED]

THANK YOU for Saving the Theater at PA Square

Virginia Smedberg [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 2:21 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

First, please thank the Architectural Review Board for their unanimous decision against changing the theater into office space. Send messages of thanks to arb@CityofPaloAlto.org (and bcc cinearts@sonic.net).

Dear ARB - as a long time (since 1952) resident of PA, I appreciate your efforts to come to your unanimous decision against changing the theater into office space, and I want to thank you for doing so. I didn't go to many movies there, but having the space available for such events which gather live humans together in person, I consider very important. (Despite the covid risk - and other viruses - which can be mitigated by other less irreversible actions.

And as a performing artist (violinist) i wonder especially if it can be an intimate live performance space among its many possible functions.

cheers - virginia

EARTH without **ART**
is just **EH**

Cinearts Palo Alto Square

ilenesok nextonthetee.com [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 4:58 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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Thank you for saving the movie theater. We love going there. We are happy it will remain.
Ilene Sokoloff

Sent from my iPhone

PA Square Theater

Cheryl Burns [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 5:50 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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Thank you for keeping the PA Square Theater!

Thanks for rejecting the plan to turn Palo Alto Square theater into office space

R W [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 7:02 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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Many, many thanks for rejecting the plan to turn Palo Alto Square theater into office space. I am hope that that decision will help us retain an important community asset.

Thanks again,

Rega Wood

[REDACTED]
Palo Alto

Theater at Palo Alto Square

Richard Stolee [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 7:07 AM

To: Council, City <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>; savecinearts@lists.sonic.net <savecinearts@lists.sonic.net>; Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>; ctraboard <ctraboard@googlegroups.com> [REDACTED] cinearts@sonic.net <cinearts@sonic.net>

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Dear City Council and others,

This is now a great opportunity for the city to bring to the community a first class film venue if we don't leave the success to people who don't care about the value to the residents of Palo Alto..

Rather than repeat the success of the Guild (a recommendation by some local residents), I would recommend a Film venue similar to our successful Stanford Theater, but play more recent historic and classic and art films that people from all over the Bay Area will come to see. This has been done at other places very successfully.. We can and should not compete with larger multiplex theater complexes who can show and purchase current films at lower price margins than a two theater complex, but if we create a unique experience unlike the other movie chains, it will be successful.

Also I would consider a non profit option, run by the community with a Board of Directors who would appoint an executive director/film curator. It would be sort of a film museum where film lovers come to learn about the history of film and learn more about how the film was created and interesting facts about the film. We could produce Palo Alto film festivals that would bring unique and current films unknown to the usual Cineplex varieties. We could even invite actors, producers, and directors to come occasionally to talk about the films. This is a highly educated community that would love a film club type environment. We could even partner with Stanford University that would bring in students to the venue and perhaps utilize faculty for the educational component. We could provide memberships to aid in costs and allow members to see films with reduced ticket prices, and receive invitations to special events. Film at Lincoln Center in New York is a prime example: <https://www.filmlinc.org/about-us/>. Let's make this museum a destination spot in Palo Alto and put the city on the map with this unique museum. By bringing people from all over the Bay area to our town, we also contribute to the success of local restaurants and hotels, especially if we create a Palo Alto film festival. We could partner with Stanford Theater and Aquarius for additional theaters.

This is the time. We can no longer depend upon the Palo Alto square developers to find a tenant for the theater site.

Thank you for listening to the residents and I hope you will go along with the ARB's recommendation to not allow this site to be turned over to more office space that is unneeded in the city. Let's put together a task force of interested and knowledgeable folks to build and create the Palo Alto Film Club/Museum for all of us.

Richard Stolee

Saving contacts

Davina Brown [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 7:19 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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Thank you

Davina Brown

Sent from my iPhone

Saving Cine Arts

Joyce Kellner <[REDACTED]>

Sun 9/15/2024 8:48 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Thank you for taking the wishes/ needs of the local folks seriously and preserving our favorite theater. Now what? I think it should continue to show films but also perhaps be a performance venue.

Best regards,
Joyce N Kellner

Thank you

Nickie Irvine [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 9:38 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

Cc:cinearts@sonic.net <cinearts@sonic.net>

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I wanted to thank you greatly for saving the Palo Alto Square CinéArts, and I look forward to enjoying not only the movies but any community events that may also be able to use the space. We are all very grateful to the Review Board for your decision and support.

Nickie Irvine

thank you

Nancy Hamilton [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 9:39 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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for rescuing the Palo Alto Theatre!

Sincerely,
Nancy Hamilton

Many thanks for not changing CineArts to office space

Joanne Donsky [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 12:10 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

Cc:Stuart Oremland <soremland160@gmail.com>

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To the Architectural Board of Palo Alto,

I want to thank you for deciding not to change CineArts to office space.

We loved having CineArts as a movie theater with wonderful movies. How wonderful it would be to have it back again!

Joanne Donsky and Stuart Oremland

Thanks for speaking up to save the theater at PA Square

Tina Peak <[REDACTED]>

Sun 9/15/2024 12:24 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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Dear ARB,

Thank you for being will to speak up to try to save the theater at PA Square. We have lost so many public places for relaxation and entertainment over the years. As the earth becomes more densely populated it is like our government planning officials and large employers want us all to stay inside with our computers when we are not at work.

So it is nice to have a local government board that understands that it is the right thing to do to require developments to include places for people to gather to do things besides just work! Your stand is much appreciated.

Regards,
Tina Peak

RE: [Save PA Square CinéArts] About the Palo Alto Square theater

Luce, Gwen [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 1:35 PM

To: cinearts@sonic.net <cinearts@sonic.net>

Cc: Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Thanking the Architectural Review Board for their unanimous decision against changing the theater into office space.



Gwen Luce, Realtor®

Global Luxury and Senior Real Estate Specialist

Mobile: 650.224.3670

gluce@cbnorcal.com

www.gwenluce.com

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Thank you

Carol Muller · [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 1:38 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Thank you for your support of maintaining the theatre at Palo Alto Square — in whatever way our society evolves, we will still need gathering spaces with comfortable seating for viewing and listening to support arts, performances, civic engagement, community, learning, and engaging across differences to find commonalities. The original intent to provide publicly-accessible gathering space as a public benefit in this location still persists, and will only grow as the population grows. And the success of many theatres, including the Stanford Theatre and others suggests that movies aren't "dead" — they may just need different kinds of organizations to develop to offer and support them.

Carol Muller

[REDACTED]
Palo Alto, CA

Carol B. Muller, Ph.D.

[REDACTED]

Save Palo Alto theater

Ellen Hartog [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 4:38 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Sent from my iPhone

Please keep the theater. There is no need for more vacant office space and this is one of the last movie theaters in Palo Alto- such a shame to loose. Please save Palo Alto's movie theater!

Ellen Hartog

[REDACTED]
Palo Alto, CA. 94306

Please keep the theater at Palo Alto Square

Carol Sontag [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 9:27 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

Cc:Arthur Keller <cinarts@sonic.net>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

My husband and I are writing to request that you not turn the historic Palo Alto Square theater into office space.

We are saddened by the loss of this theater and hope that it will return to a vital part of our community.

Carol and Mark Sontag
Portola Valley, CA

Palo Alto Square Theater

Ronnie Falcao [REDACTED]

Sun 9/15/2024 11:31 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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Dear Member of the Architectural Review Board:

Thank you very much for deciding against changing the Palo Alto Square Theater into office space.

Regards,
Veronica (Ronnie) Falcao

Keeping PA Square Theater

Shannon McEntee [REDACTED]

Mon 9/16/2024 12:01 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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Dear Architectural Review Board Members,

Thank you for protecting the theater for Palo Alto residents. I have missed it terribly and I look forward to having an accessible theater right in the middle of our wonderful city, with easy parking and right on a bus route. I hope we'll once again have the NY Metropolitan Opera performances and maybe England's National Theatre performances, etc!

Sincerely,

Shannon Rose McEntee
Longtime Palo Alto Resident

CinéArts development

Greg Watson [REDACTED]

Mon 9/16/2024 12:05 PM

To: Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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To the Architectural Board,

Thank you for choosing to not turn CinéArts into more office space. Your decision is appreciated. Hopefully we can get more mixed housing and retail.

Sincerely, Greg Watson

[REDACTED]

PA Square CineArts

Alice Gross [REDACTED]

Mon 9/16/2024 12:27 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU for saving this important theater!!

Alice Gross, long term resident of Barron Park.

Palo Alto Sq

Kathleen M Eisenhardt [REDACTED]

Mon 9/16/2024 2:09 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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Architectural Review Board

Thanks so much for supporting the Cinearts space at Palo Alto Sq. A wise decision for the long run!

Looking forward the next step.

Best.

K. Eisenhardt

[REDACTED]
PA

Thank You - Palo Alto Square Theater

Martha Maris [REDACTED]

Mon 9/16/2024 6:29 PM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

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Architectural Review Board
City of Palo Alto

Dear Members of the Board:

Thank you very much for your unanimous decision against changing the Palo Alto Square theater into office space. This theater has been (before its closure) a real jewel for the city and surrounding areas for many years.

I am hoping that we can find a way to re-open the theater and identify compatible businesses for the immediate area.

Thank again,
Martha Maris

Thank you

Barbara Moss Keller 

Tue 9/17/2024 9:31 AM

To:Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>

Cc:cinearts@sonic.net <cinearts@sonic.net>

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Hello,

Thank you for determining that we do not need more office space and at this point preserving the cineasts movie theater structure. I have enjoyed movies there over the years.

The last thing we need is more office space, we need more recreation and retail in Palo Alto. Thank you for representing the residents and not the developers.

Barbara Moss Keller

Palo Alto, Ca.